

HYBRIDITY, NOSTALGIA, AND ALIENATION IN THE SELECT SHORT STORIES OF POSTCOLONIAL DIASPORIC WRITERS

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ABSTRACT

Migration of people from one country to another has taken place since the early times and has affected postcolonial diasporic writers' ideas. The study investigated the five short stories of postcolonial diasporic writers. It used critical discourse analysis to identify the postcolonial themes of cultural, economic, and political issues and concerns and the concept of hybridity and alienation.

Findings show that the history and geography of the authors' homelands form the backdrops of their stories. The characters, especially the protagonists, resemble the authors' experiences. The stories were heavily loaded with melancholy and isolation caused by the economic, political, and cultural struggles. This feeling was magnified by the various poignant experiences of being discriminated, oppressed, and deceived and the deep longing for family, relatives, and friends back home. Nonetheless, the stories' characters showed ways of disabling emotions and getting the good side of the situation rather than folding their arms in despair and obscuring themselves in lonesomeness. Further, the study reveals that migration in this postcolonial period has taken people from previous colonies into diaspora searching for greener pasture, especially in the colonizer's host land. They adapted to the host land's culture and became a hybrid to fit in yet not lose their identity.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Challenges, Diaspora, Literature, Migration & Qualitative Study

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1. INTRODUCTION

In his book 'The Heart of Darkness (2015, ed.),' Joseph Conrad argues that when one looks into it too deeply, conquering the earth, which usually entails taking it away from people who have darker skin color or slightly flatter noses than the white, is not a pretty thing, and that what redeems it is the idea alone and unselfish belief in the idea, which has changed the way people perceived the world.

A big part of the history of humankind includes conquest for territorial expansion, colonization, and domination. For example, for various causes, the West conquered the East: expanding territories and searching for valuable resources like gold and spices. When Europeans reached the eastern part of the world, they found a new world that they viewed as very different from their own. Judging based on their standards, these people's culture and physical features were inferior, giving them the most valid reason for colonization. Orientalism, as the study of the Orientals, was then conceived. Studying their culture concluded that the Orientals' culture was highly exotic. Hence, orientalism was, therefore, a science of the Orientals and their exotic civilizations.

According to Said (1986), Europeans split the world into two categories: occident and orient, East and West, or, worse, the racist category - civilized and uncivilized. This further defined the world's imaginary border and marked the beginning of the concepts of "them" and "us," or "theirs" and "ours." The Europeans claimed

themselves as the superior race. In so doing, they considered the Orientals inferior. This, therefore, gave them a safe justification for their colonization policy. The assumption that being superior and civilized, the West's duty to educate and humanize the uncivilized and exotic world paved a highway for colonization. Said (1986) further insisted that the motive of the 19th-century exploration was to make one culture submit to the exporters'-proclaimed dominance or the ordination of the colonizer's rights over the native's inferior culture and local freedoms.

The ordination of the colonizers' intentions over their subjects was simplified by the various struggles for power among them for varying ethnicity, regionalities, and cultural identities and by the few fights these locals had against former conquerors. This gave the former an advantage in exploiting the subjects, manipulating opinions, and presenting the ideological representations of the colonizers being allies and saviors from their present challenging situations. All these political tactics shaped a society of people in which the "Other," the "impure," the "raw," the "strange" is utilized as a device in gaining dominance by the West, opposing imaginary complex and fair culture. A binary understanding of human societies conceived that of the colonized seen as the other, possessing inferior qualities and exotic culture and that of the colonizers proclaimed as Savior, civilized and superior culture Sprinker (1993).

Colonization lasted for centuries. The West's significant exploits in the orient have brought them abundant riches, including easy access to human resources. However, the significant world collisions powers unstoppably happened; hence world wars became another primary source of worlds' preoccupations. After World War II, postcolonial ideology arose, and the concept of decolonization became a trending concern. It became the world's central policy and a prevailing ideology in all fields of endeavor. In the field of literature, works from old colonial regions such as the Indian subcontinent, Asia, Nigeria, and other South African countries, and numerous parts of the Caribbean are now identified as postcolonial.

According to Adepoju (2008), another effect of colonization is migration, which has three key players: the migrant, his or her homeland or country of origin, and his or her host land or country of destination- a phenomenon that caused many people in diaspora or dispersion. Diaspora comes from the Greek word *diasperien*, which means "across," and "sperien," which means "to sow or spread seeds." It refers to groups of individuals who have been displaced from their mother country due to relocation or exile. Large-scale transnational migration of individuals across national borders has recently become a global challenge in politics, economics, ethnicity, and social issues confronting many Asian and European countries (Dimri, 1996).

Postcolonial literature authors then tell a story from an insider's perspective, attempting to reclaim political will and organization in the facade of historical oppression. Their masterpieces may provide an avenue to understand a culture and an experience that used to be unknown because they were untold. These works, on the other hand, are made up of stories and ideas that would push many people and traditions to the margins. In short, though much has been written about colonial experiences, colonialism is still very much at play nowadays. "Until lions have historians, as an African proverb says it, hunting stories will always acclaim the hunter (Spreng, 2015)

This study is designed against the backdrop of diasporic experiences of individuals, communities, and nations, as well as the conceptions as mentioned earlier of historical identity and power struggles of colonial nations (post colonialism). Five short stories of postcolonial diasporic writers were the subject of the study. The stories were chosen based on the track record of the diasporic authors representing former colonies in the major parts of the world. Jhumpa Lahiri of India wrote *Interpreter of Maladies*, Jamaica Kincaid of Antigua wrote *Holidays*, Carlos Bulosan of the Philippines wrote *The Romance of Magno Rubio*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie of Nigeria wrote "The Thing Around Your

Neck," and Ahdaf Soueif of Egypt wrote *Sandpiper*. The stories were examined using the lens of post colonialism and new historicism.

2. TECHNICAL/POETIC CONTENTS

2.1 Postcolonial Context of Hybridity

The Interpreter of Maladies The primary plot of the story centers on the Das family, a couple and two children who are second-generation migrants to the United States, during a visit to India, their ancestral homeland, to visit their parents, who have chosen to retire in India after years of living in the United States of America. In the story, the couple and their children demonstrate a variety of hybrid circumstances. These accounts are told through the eyes of Mr. Kapasi, the guide the family employs for a one-day tour of India's most essential and historical attractions. The family appears to be Indian, although they are dressed as foreigners.

Because they were born and raised in the United States, the family's fashion sense is entirely American. Their Indian exposure while growing up was limited to home and perhaps to their ethnic circles and communities in their adoptive country. Their assimilation to the American culture is natural and easy, considering the whole of their education was obtained in American schools.

Mr. Kapasi notices the family's hybridity not only in their physical appearance but also in their habits. Mr. Kapasi's Indian greeting of pressing palms together was responded by Mr. Das grasping hands like an American, causing Mr. Kapasi to feel it in his elbow (P. 29 in Lahiri, 1999). The Das couple's approach to child-rearing is similarly hybrid. Mr. Kapasi saw that it was very different from his and his wife's methods of parenting their children, as well as from the rest of the Indians' methods. Their mindset and belief system are likewise mixed. Although they appear to be highly vocal and emancipated on the outside, a large chunk deep within is quite oriental, and the belief in the Indian idea of karma and guilt is evident.

When Mr. Kapasi tells the family about his other job as an interpreter of maladies to a doctor while in the car on the way to the Sun Temple, Mrs. Das gives a startling response that she finds the job romantic and expresses a strong interest in Mr. Kapasi, causing the latter to develop an unexpected feeling of liking her and silently imagining romantic exchanges of communication with her as they continue with the schedule of the day's tour. Mr. Kapasi awakens from a romantic illusion about Mrs. Das when she reveals to him that Bobby, the couple's second child, is not Mr. Das's son but an Indian friend who visits them briefly while still adjusting to life in the United States. In oriental culture, very delicate issues like this should never be revealed to anyone, especially to a stranger whom one has just met. His disillusionment stems not only from the revelation he just received but also from Mrs. Das candidness in saying that she expected from him a possible remedy for the dreadful feeling she had for the past eight years, to make her feel better, given his job as a maladies interpreter and the fact that he is twice her age.

The eastern value of face, which is more essential than one's well-being, overcomes Das's facade of liberation and sophistication at that moment. Face, according to Novinger (2001), is the value or reputation a person has in the eyes of others, and it is linked to pride or self-respect. Brill (2010) states that the concept of face is an essential social value in Asian cultures. Though Mrs. Das appeared to the carefree and egotistical ways of the West, deep down, she felt dreadful and sorry for her offense, which she could not hold, causing her to unwittingly disclose her dark secret to a stranger as Mr. Kapasi. Another aspect of hybridity shown in the story is one's attitude toward family. Although it was mentioned at the

start that the family's parenting style was quite western, it was seen that the wife and children demonstrated a caring and nurturing approach when Bobby's safety was threatened by the monkeys. They all had an eastern attitude of sympathy, worry, and compassion, which arose precisely when Bobby needed it the most.

To summarize, Mr. Kapasi is perplexed by the ethnic ambiguity surrounding the Das family. He is perplexed by the Das couple's Indian physical traits and American lifestyle, especially the family's behavior as foreign tourists in their homeland. Mr. Das is studying a paperback tour book of India that appears to have been published overseas. (Lahiri, p. 49, 1999). The pair proudly admits to Mr. Kapasi that they were both born and reared in the United States. They were in India because their parents had chosen to spend their retirement years in Asansol despite having spent so many years in America. It implies that the ethnic group they had abandoned drew them back to their homeland in the twilight of their lives – a perfect exemplification of the oriental belief of people always finding a way to come back home no matter how far they have gone.

In some ways, the story's hybridity echoes the author's actual or maybe vicarious experiences being a second-generation migrant herself. Lahiri was born and raised in the West (England and the United States) and had a mother who upholds Indian customs in the home. She went with her parents on numerous visits to their homeland, where she interacted with her locales in the United States. Hence, despite being educated in American schools, interstices are not far off. Because the story is about neo-class expatriates, their diasporic experiences differed from their parents; this was neither a blessing nor a curse. Their issues come in a variety of shapes and sizes. According to Dimri (1999), these neo-class immigrants' predicament is, in many ways, worse than that of their forefathers, because they were born and raised on foreign soil.

Holidays. "Holidays" is the fifth in the anthology of short stories entitled 'At the Bottom of the River' and is understood to be autobiographical accounts of the author's life in Antigua of the Caribbean Islands. The story is narrated in prose poetry form in the first-person point of view, with the heroine unfolding everything that goes in her head – her life experiences both in the home and in the adaptive land. It is not easy to pinpoint the emergence of interstices or hybridization among characters because it does not follow a definite plot, unlike traditional storytelling. The story's central point spins around the protagonist, who left home and traveled to a new place (which appears to be the United States) where she felt both free and lost. The protagonist seems to be having identity issues. The story depicts a love-hate connection between a daughter and her mother, symbolically signifying the homeland (colony- a small place) and the adaptable land (colonizer's country). Attempts to fit in through adaptation to the new place were mentioned several times throughout the novel. That part of the story when she attempts to write her name in the dead ashes was a figurative representation of her desire to adopt but then fails. The use of a royal blue rug was meant to suggest her ethnic beliefs and culture acquired through life and which she carried up to the host land, which eventually got blemished by her effort of adaptation. The burning sensation in her feet indicates that she was experiencing distress due to the adaptation process; nonetheless, she understood that she must do so to survive in the new place.

Another case of her refusal to accept the new culture was when she characterized the act of removing her hand from her head while resting as an expression of her wish to kill her mother, according to their ethnic superstition. Concentrating on the symbolism of mother and daughter as that of the colonizer and colonized relation, it appears that the protagonist had a hidden desire to break free from the colonizer's cultural shackles, as evidenced by her desire to kill her mother; however, she yielded to the fact that the adaptive land offered her a different life, especially that of material

advancement.

In summary, the protagonist of the story, who left home to accept a job in America, was on a search for independence. It entails an endeavor to improve her self-esteem while also emphasizing the difference between life at home and life in the new location. Kincaid had left her island home in Antigua at the age of 17 to take a job working for a wealthy family in Scarsdale, New York; it was her poignant introduction to American life. Hence, the story, to some degree, is autobiographical.

The Romance of Magno Rubio. The story took place during the American commonwealth when hopeful Filipinos flocked to the United States to work on large farms during the Great Depression between 1929 and 1933. The plot revolves around these immigrant employees' increasing disenchantment with the land they assumed was overflowing with sugar and honey at the start. It shows semblance with "The Thing around Your Neck," with plots dealing with the struggles of the colonized in the colonizer's land; however, the Filipinos' unconquerable soul is also a powerful climax. The characters' survival in the most perplexing circumstances in the host land was made possible by Filipinos' unique character of resiliency. In the story, this same character is also responsible for them positively looking at the instances of adaptation and hybridization.

The primary character, Magno Rubio, was a Filipino native who tried to maintain composure amidst the diverse demands at work, with Filipino workmates, and with Clarabelle, the Arkansas lady with whom he had a romantic interest. Despite the harshest labor he and the other Filipino farmworkers had at the farms of Claro, a fellow Filipino farmworker taking advantage of his illiteracy and witlessness; and, above all, of the deceit Clarabelle did to him; his spirit remained untarnished. He was quite aware of both his strength and weaknesses. He hired Claro to write love letters to Clarabelle for him and got bullied and deceived until Nick came to his rescue.

Magno Rubio and the rest of the Filipino laborers sipped red wine and played cards in their bunkhouse to decompress the day's physical and spiritual toll. When in America, Filipinos like Magno Rubio, who used to drink basi or lambanog, drank red wine and played American card games like poker and solitaire. This was an excellent example of cultural absorption, particularly in food and beverages, games, and recreational activities.

Filipino laborers in the United States have ingested American materialism out of need, eventually losing their sense of spirituality and transcendence. Claro, for instance, by writing Magno love letters for Clarabelle, with the pay increases with each letter- a very expedient way of getting his return of investment on his second-grade education in the Philippines- ignored the long-standing penalties of deceit on his spiritual welfare.

Despite the bleak side of the American dream, it was heartening to see how a few mediocre and sufficiently educated Filipino immigrants absorbed western pragmatism and openness and put them to good use. For example, Nick acted as Magno's guardian angel and remained with him throughout, assisting him in his truthful and proper correspondences with Clarabelle - far superior to Claro's, to his perplexing meeting with her and up to Magno's piercing realization of her deception. Magno's reception of such fraud to his moving on became easier with Nick's reassurance of friendship and brotherhood.

Nick, for instance, served as Magno's guardian angel and stayed with him, guiding him from truthful and appropriate correspondences with Clarabelle, many times better than those of Claro's, to his confusing meeting with her and even during Magno's pungent moment of comprehension of her deception. Nick made Magno's acceptance and

perhaps moving- on a bit calmer, assured that a friend and a stand-in brother were there with and for him.

The Thing around Your Neck. The story is set in the author's adaptive land - the United States of America. The plot revolves around Akunna, the protagonist, and her struggles in the United States after winning a visa lottery ticket that granted her passage to her people's seemingly promised land. In the story, which was told from the second-person point of view, lesser instances of hybridity can be observed.

Being a person of color in some parts of the United States is somehow associated with a burden. Though Akunna stayed in Maine and then Connecticut, both on the northeastern coast of the United States and where racism was no longer a problem, her hardships were still genuine. Along with her problems, she made an effort to blend in, which provides a window into hybridization. Through his uncle and his family, Akunna got her first taste of cultural exposure to the American culture as a black migrant in the United States.

Aside from cuisine, the family has picked up on pragmatism and materialism in the United States. Even her uncle advised her to work hard in order to get more. Although the following remark can be viewed via a cultural lens, it is best implemented from an economical and practical one. In Akunna's situation, the worst facet of hybridity is when she came dangerously close to becoming a victim to the West's fleshly emancipation and expression, which oriental and other civilizations traditionally frowned upon. Her uncle - not by consanguinity (brother of her father's sister's husband) must have had his sense of preservation, reverence, and patience smothered by erotic passion and urgent carnal gratification, and utilitarianism tried to get sexual pleasure from her in exchange for getting her a visa to America."

Akunna met an American guy who became her friend and later her boyfriend. Eventually, she gave in to what she said was the amazing openness of people in America - of how readily they shared personal stories like their mother fighting cancer, bickering with in-laws, and other information that people in her homeland basically should keep to themselves or should reveal only to the family members for well-wishing. She finally felt at ease chatting with his boyfriend and his family, with whom she discussed a considerable deal about herself and her life in Lagos, possibly concealing the most sensitive details.

The story also depicts the author's experience of relocating to America. Her struggle to keep her ethnicity while assimilating into the adaptive land and, more importantly, dealing with racism is comparable to that of her heroine, Akunna. In an interview with *Fresh Air's* Terry Gross (2013), Adichie (2007) described how, as a black African in America, she immediately learned how skin color counts in America and how difficult it is to be non-white. She had to learn to navigate and understand the concept of racial prejudice. She was perplexed, for example, by the watermelon comparison emblem for African-Americans in the United States. When the topic of watermelon was brought up in one of her undergraduate classes, for example, and a student said something about watermelon to an African-American classmate, the latter was offended. She could feel this African-American classmate's annoyance with her because she didn't share her anger, but she didn't understand the context behind the watermelon symbolism.

She was perplexed, for example, by the watermelon stereotyped comparison emblem for black people in the United States. When the topic of watermelon was brought up in one of her undergraduate classes, and a student said something about watermelon to an African-American classmate, the latter was offended by the comment. She could feel this African-American classmate's annoyance with her because she did not share her anger, but she did not understand the context behind the watermelon symbolism. She wishes that schoolchildren in Nigeria were taught about the trans-Atlantic

slave trade. She also recognized that she had yet to fully comprehend the history of slavery and its lingering effects in the United States (Gross, 2013)

Sandpiper

Sandpiper is a short story about a woman who, with her husband, crosses the cultural limits of her imperial home and finds herself puzzled, misunderstood, and stranded in a new land. Ahdaf Soueif, the author, presents a diasporic perspective from the perspective of a displaced Western female subject toward Egypt, its people, and its culture. The setting of this novel on the Egyptian coast of Alexandria symbolizes the family's place in life; they are caught in the middle of two cultures, in a space that is neither genuine Egypt nor real England. It is a cross-cultural location where two cultures collide but do not merge.

The story did not contain many examples of hybridization, except for the biological aspect, in which the couple's daughter was already a mixed breed (half English and half Egyptian/Palestinian). The protagonist was stuck in the middle of two cultures: western and eastern. She eventually became aware of her foreignness and incapacity to assimilate herself into the new culture to meet her husband's needs and expectations. Her husband interpreted everything for her and said things to her that she has come to understand meant "tomorrow she would get used to their ways." (Soueif, 2007, p.109) As most men do, the statement shows her husband's expectation that she would gradually adapt to his social and cultural norms.

The protagonist made attempts at adaption, but these were met with resistance from society. Local merchants, for example, attempted to exploit her foreignness, while the housekeepers thought she was too regal for domestic duties. It shows how ineffective her integration efforts were (Hafsi, 2017). People take advantage of outsiders in most third-world nations, particularly in the East, by tripling or marking up the price of goods and services. Others hold foreigners in such high regard, mainly white foreigners like the protagonist in the novel, and treat them differently out of amusement or owing to the halo preconditioning of their supremacy and economic advancement over other races. On the negative side, these traditions make it difficult for foreigners to adjust to their new environment. Symbolism like balancing her toes on a hot stone, the beach, and the sea pointed to the protagonist's inability to change.

The protagonist in this story felt alone in her adaptation struggles that she could not obtain help from anybody else in her host country, especially her husband. She was giving up on trying to fit in; she also did not want to push her western culture on them. This statement expresses her willingness to accept the paternal culture and that she leaves her child's upbringing and the rest of the matters to chance.

The situation above supports Kim and Kim's (2016) definition of cross-cultural adaptation which is the totality of the event when people migrate to the host land and attempt to maintain a stable, reciprocal, purposeful, and functional relationship with the environment and to achieve a general fit and acceptance and to maximize social life changes. Ethnic closeness, host communication skills, host interpersonal communication, and psychological disposition all play a role in adaptation, according to Kim and Kim (2016). The discrepancy between the elements mentioned above is so significant in the case of England and Egypt, according to Said (1986), that the West has convinced the world that they are superior and civilized while the East is exotic and uncivilized; hence, educating the East is their noble mission. Despite her best efforts, the protagonist eventually gave up, most likely because she had a strong resistance to change, believing that her culture was far superior to her husband's and that their love for each other could be the magic ingredient in creating a perfect blend

of their cultural differences.

3.2. Diasporic Themes

Some postcolonial analyses have touched on some diasporic themes of nostalgia and alienation. Nonetheless, this study investigates nostalgia and alienation in greater depth, with themes such as memories of the motherland, alienation in the new country, continuous support for the homeland, collective identity, and a wish to return. A significant result of diaspora was the emergence of new types of people dispersed worldwide who tried to define themselves by their Otherness. These new people have their origins in ideas rather than places, in memories and concepts, and are destined to experience and inhabit a condition of in-betweenness hyphenated interstitial spaces, as defined by Homi Bhabha. (Dimri, 2018).

3.2.1. Theme of Nostalgia, Memory, and Imaginary Homelands

The Interpreter of Maladies

In this narrative about Indian immigrants to the United States, Lahiri discreetly probes people's reactions to cultural differences and investigates the ties that bind people to their homelands while also pulling them away. The story features a repetitive narration of Mrs. Das consuming a packet of puffed rice, despite the dearth of references to Indian cuisine products. Despite its appearance as a minor issue, food plays a critical function in society and the nation. Food was more than a simple source of nourishment, according to Mustafa and Welsh (2002); it was also a fundamental component of human culture, central to our sense of identity. It represents social status, economic class, and privilege. Food gets associated with immigrants' and non-residents' identities. It gives a foreigner a sense of belonging. Familiar foods bring much joy here. Mustaffa and Welsh (2002) further say that feeling at home was not just about having access to nutritionally adequate but also culturally suitable foods. Feeling welcome in policy, practice, and everyday symbols is also necessary for belonging. As a result, food plays an essential role in cultural exchange and bonding. It is one approach for them to recreate their homelands, which helps them combat nostalgia. Jhumpa Lahiri depicts the degeneration of family bonds, community, and culture from Indian to American ways of life through food and dining traditions.

Because the story is about neo-class expatriates, their diasporic experience was different from their parents; this was neither a blessing nor a curse. Their issues vary. According to Dimri (1999), these neo-class immigrants' plight is, in many ways, worse than that of their forefathers because they were born and raised on foreign soil. They are victimized and stigmatized despite their integration and acculturation. The most important consideration, though, is to make it through and live a productive life in whatever country an immigrant is in at the time. This experience is confirmed by the story's author, Jhumpa Lahiri, being a neo-class immigrant herself.

Holiday

The story was set in an adaptive land, which is thought to be the United States. The narrator-protagonist appears to be relieved to have departed her tiny island home, but she also appears to be free but lost in the new continent. Her sense of aimlessness and wandering seemed to have been exacerbated by the escape. The story's setting, a porch in a vacation hut, allows her to recollect herself.

Her traveling brings her an assortment of reminiscences of her origin and adopted land when she sits alone. In her mind's eye, she sees tenants carrying a speck of food, her toes tapping out a beat, the family dog getting sprayed by a skunk, the prism in the camera breaking due to exposure to the scorching sun, a blind man on a walk, and many other images (Kincaid, 2017). It is possible to deduce that the narrator is dissatisfied with her current situation and longs for the

past. This somehow affirms Weller (2013), who claims that nostalgia is beneficial to humanity in multiple ways. Reminiscing may begin as a difficulty, but it may also finish pleasantly, giving the person a sense of connection and attachment and making us a better person.

As the narrator continues to reminisce, she recalls her mother and removes her hands from her head and maybe the cultural superstition that comes with it. This act has likely absolved her of whatever remorse she may have had about her mother sending her to the United States to supplement their family's low income. (About Kincaid's personal experience). She has pulled out the more positive ones, such as the sensible house and sensible man, the orange sunset, and a lot more, as she continues to entertain the thoughts that pass through her head. She also feels better about her current situation by remembering that she has a convenient compact bag and an efficient small car in New York.

The narrator-protagonist seemed to have discovered a better means of surviving and existing in the host land through nostalgia. It can also be deduced that this gesture provides a clear link to the motherland and her pleasant history when it is most required.

The Romance of Magno Rubio

They came to the host country because they yearned for the ideology and promise of the American Dream, for the overwhelming desire for a better life, brotherhood, and equality, and for the possibility of achieving a better life through hard work and effort. Such promises have betrayed Magno Rubio and the rest of the Filipino workers; instead, they have faced physical struggles, exploitation, and discrimination. While pursuing the American Dream in the United States, the dream revealed its true face of a false ideology, hence turning into the American Nightmare, Kim & Kim (2016). Before they arrived in the U.S., Filipinos were veritable dreamers, and that young people in the Philippines all dreamed of one day arriving in the United States, Libretti, T. (1998).

As cited in the "History of Graphic Novels: 1970's - Summary" Critical Survey of Graphic Novels: History, Theme, and Technique eNotes.com, Inc. 2012, Bulosan was well aware of the betrayal that dream had on him and every other Filipino immigrant in the United States, especially years before the outbreak of Second World War and during the years of the Great Depression in the United States. As cited in the Watsonville Anti-Filipino Riot of 1930: A Case Study of the Great Depression and Ethnic Conflict in California. *Southern California Quarterly*, 61(3), 291–302. by D.E. Witt, H. A. (1979), the Oakie influx and the hysteria of the dust bowl migration weakened the mobility and wage structure of transient farmworkers and brought a wide gap and even conflict between the white and the ethnic minorities working on farms. The Americans treated Magno and other Filipinos like animals. Magno was physically and spiritually broken, especially when he read signs that said No Dogs or Filipinos Allowed in public places. Magno Rubio is considered a monkey and dresses in rags since this is how Americans perceive Filipinos.

On the other hand, Magno Rubio continues to hold on to the dream. He hoped that he would achieve the elusive American Dream represented by Clarabelle one day. He was willing to give anything to have her; however, just like the American Dream, the actual façade of duplicity and dupe emerged, shattering it to pieces. Magno, however, who possessed the Filipino power of a dream, was unfazed and vowed to resume his life.

Dreams can lighten and overcome the most difficult circumstances for a Filipino like Magno. Nostalgia for the homeland was also depicted in the story, albeit in a small way. The poor Filipino workers in the crowded bunkhouse would assemble during the day off, attempting to recreate home through the many activities that most Filipinos engage in as

leisure while utilizing the resources available. "We were going about our daily routines when we did not have any work", as Nick put it.

The Thing Around Your Neck

The story dealt with nostalgia as a significant theme. For the story's main character, being practically and figuratively alone for the first time in a nation other than one's homeland was not particularly enjoyable. Despite her lofty aspirations and ambitions, her optimism could not always overcome the demons of disillusionment and desperation she encountered in the host country. Even a vacation to a place can make one understand that what everyone says about it is not always accurate. Akunna's nostalgia was eventually articulated in the story's title.

The distinctive second-person voice literary style the writer used in the story gave it a didactic tone. The impression is that the story's primary character, the invisible narrator, talks to herself, preaching about her mistakes. "Why did you come to America?" can be deduced from the character questioning herself in front of a mirror. "How long can you keep going?"

"What new adversities are on the horizon?" Furthermore, there are more unanswered questions. Akunna, on the other hand, lovingly manages to get-by by drawing inspiration from her wardrobe of memories, hopes, and expectations of family, relatives, and friends back home. She spends much time in the choice admiring the beauty of sorrow. According to Adichie (2007), melancholy is lovely in literature, stories, melodies, and even among humans. She makes Akunna go through a period of melancholy in the novel to overcome the agony of nostalgia and loneliness and bring out her creativity. Melancholia, which is now connected with depressive mental disorders in medical and psychological circles, was once thought to be a sign of creative genius during the Renaissance (Brown, 2007).

Most immigrants and overseas workers, like Akunna, find respite from nostalgic aches by doing the same thing, usually with some audio-visual assistance like images and videos on social media, and eventually feel reinvigorated and encouraged to follow the dream. True to the story, after a thorough self-examination, an inner power emerges; as a result, the character begins to relax the thing that used to wrap around her neck and choke her has been ejected, and she has learned to let go. As she had to return to Lagos for his father's funeral, she turned away and said nothing, and when he drove her to the airport, she hugged him tight for a long, long while and then let him go. It was hinted at in the story's conclusion, where one can only speculate whether Akunna would return to the United States or not. Still, it evoked feelings of decision, independence, growth, and a fresh start.

Sandpiper

The protagonist's intense nostalgia for both her old life and her hometown is depicted in the story. She is currently thinking about the beautiful memories she shared with her hubby and counting how he loved him back then.

However, when substantial cultural differences emerged, their love began to blur. She assumes that because she is white, her culture is dominant and should have been the world's culture; she wants him and others to change and fit in; typical western pride and superiority. Nevertheless, her husband and the rest of his family expected her to fit in because she is the only white person in the house and one with a different culture; yet, she refuses to or finds it difficult because she has tried and feels estranged as time passes.

Hence, the protagonist decided to be alone. She even made it more robust by being passive and never partaking in the activities that families were supposed to do; instead, she left her husband and child to do things and create memories together. She chose the bittersweet flavor of loneliness and the sharp tang of longing for her northern country. Her case is supported by Jack Fong (2009), a sociologist at California State Polytechnic University cited by Crane (2017), who argues that when people take time to investigate their isolation, they will not only be forced to confront who they are, but they may also learn a little bit about how to avoid some of the toxicity that surrounds them in social situations."

3.2.2. Sense of Alienation in the Host Land

The Interpreter of Maladies

Alienation has several levels and perspectives in the context of second-generation immigrants. Alienation is neither of the motherland nor the adapted land in their situation. The book *Interpreter of Maladies* shows how these neo-class immigrants grew estranged from their ancestral roots and how they are unfamiliar with the roots of the adoptive culture, although they embrace it. This estrangement can be seen in everything from cuisine and clothing to more profound aspects of beliefs, philosophy, and religion.

According to Bhabha (2006), this was an example of hyphenated culture. The gaps between the two cultures are so significant that immigrants are unsure whether the culture is right for them, resulting in alienation on both sides. Although the Das family has adopted American culture, they must recognize that they have Indian cultural roots.

Holidays

Although it may not be as emphasized as the protagonists' experiences in the other stories, the alienation described in the narrative is still genuine. Some of the descriptions in the story imply loneliness; most thoughts that run through her mind are ludicrous, implying alienation and a lack of understanding of her situation and feelings. She considers writing a letter at one point, but to whom will she address her letter? "Dear, So and So," she says before dropping the thought and returning her attention to her surroundings.

Moreover, by the conclusion of the first portion, she has had enough of her boring vacation and is planning another getaway. It is also possible that she is dissatisfied with her current vacation and wishes for another. The protagonist appears to be trying to drown herself in her thoughts to conceal her inner emptiness.

Alienation refers to a person's feeling of separation from other items, such as other people, their group, or society. Various psychological and social factors mediate alienation, and migrants may be more vulnerable to alienation due to the difficulties of adjusting to a new environment. In the study of Lindio-McGovern (2004), referenced in Yang, Taoran et al. (2022), Filipino migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Chicago, Vancouver, and Rome discovered their migration experiences were substantially linked to feelings of alienation described as a sensation of being an outsider helping society but not belonging to it.

The Romance of Magno Rubio

Though cleverly buried in its parts, this satirical story was strongly burdened with a searing type of alienation. It was written using the experience of Filipino immigrants during the Great Depression and before World War II as the backdrop. It depicts injustice, discrimination, and treachery as terrible factors of alienation.

It was a matter of wrong timing for Magno and the Filipino workers who came to America San Juan (2003). Due to the economic turmoil, work was hard to come by. The number of unemployment rose dramatically, from 8 million in 1931 to at least 13 million in 1932 (Taylor, 1997), prompting fierce competition for positions available and contributing to the discrimination of migrant workers. During the Great Depression, Filipinos endured racial discrimination from mainstream Caucasian Americans. Tim Libretti (1998) notes in his essay about Carlos Bulosan's *Americas Is in the Heart* that the anti-Filipino brigade arose when unemployed white people began to take these otherwise undesirable jobs. Filipinos worked in various low-paying menial labor occupations, ranging from working in coffee shops in Seattle to harvesting crops in California to working in canaries in Alaska, where he was paid a pittance for the entire season (San Juan, 2003).

Magno Rubio represents Filipino immigrants in the United States during these difficult times. Apart from feeling betrayed and disillusioned with the American Dream, many Filipino immigrants, like Magno Rubio, daydream of loving and being loved by American girls like Clarabelle, whom they see in the magazine. The tragedy was that the love could not be fulfilled due to racial discrimination. The frustration resulted in the decay and degradation of their morals and values and a sense of emptiness as they were impeded in their pursuit of a piece of such a dream. The feeling of being marginalized and treated as a second-class citizen by even fellow Filipinos, as Claro and Clarabelle did to Magno, was a fundamental cause of their alienation.

The Thing around Your Neck

Alienation was another subject dominant in the story. Because of the protagonist's race and gender, her sense of alienation heightened. She has been marginalized because of her skin color and gender. Her harrowing experiences include being sexually exploited by her uncle, being underpaid by employers, being mistaken as Jamaican due to her skin color and accent, and people acting as though she and her white partner had an unhealthy relationship.

These things and more contributed to her sense of alienation and desolation. This was exacerbated by the fact that she had to carry all of these burdens alone.; with no one to share them with, not even her family back home via letter, because she did not want them to be concerned about her and lose faith in the American dream that everyone has.

Racism, especially against the black people, was fundamental in the world, more so in a land dominated by white like the U.S. The author, Adichie (2007), makes Akunna speak in her voice with her own experiences as an immigrant in the U.S., including that part of having a white partner. Adichie (2007), a feminist, also criticizes men's entitlement to women through Akunna's uncle. The latter attempted to obtain sexual pleasure from her, possibly as a form of retaliation for enrolling her in the visa lottery, which she won. With such an occurrence, she felt even more alienated, so she chose to leave their house, where she felt at ease because they spoke the same language (Igbo) and ate the same lunch (garri). Akunna's father's death turned out to be a blessing in disguise because she chose to return home with it. The story is unclear as to whether or not she will return. One thing was sure: if she returned, she would be more robust and better prepared to deal with the aches of diaspora.

Sandpiper

Soueif (2007) employs flashbacks to bring out the good memories that the protagonist had during her marriage and to connect them to her current marital situation and feelings. Although her husband has drifted away from her, she chooses not to pursue an actual separation. She admits, "On that swirl of shocked and wounded rage when, knowing him as I did, I

first sensed that he was slipping away from me, I should have gone to him" (Hafsi, 2017).

Furthermore, Egyptian practices were alien to her, such as upper-class women not being required to work and the covering of mirrors in the home to prevent a baby from staring into their reflection. Her husband's former nanny adds that it is said that if a newborn stares in the mirror, she will see her own grave. This superstition does not convince the protagonist, but she accepts the nanny's views. She expresses no protest when the former covers the mirror to prevent the infant from peering into it. In her surrender to her alienation, she prefers to remain silent and let her husband take the wheel until she can no longer bear the feeling.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The five stories are linked to the authors' postcolonial and diasporic experiences, albeit they are not necessarily autobiographical. History, geography, and economics all impact people's lives and experiences and serve to determine the themes and subjects of a country's literary activities. People from former colonies in the diaspora, particularly the colonizer's land, have become hybrid. They adapt to the new culture while maintaining their own identity to fit in and fight nostalgia and alienation for self-advancement and better their families, relatives, and friends back home.

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